HOKKAIDO UNIVERSITY

Title	TA Training and PFF Program at Hokkaido University
Author(s)	Hosokawa, Toshiyuki
Citation	高等教育ジャーナル : 高等教育と生涯学習, 18, 39-42
Issue Date	2011-01
DOI	https://doi.org/10.14943/J.HighEdu.18.39
Doc URL	https://hdl.handle.net/2115/56784
Type	departmental bulletin paper
File Information	JHELL18_007.pdf

Hokkaido University Collection of Scholarly and Academic Papers : HUSCAP

Workshop 2009
Preparing Future Faculty: An Introduction to Teaching and Writing for Graduate Students (March 18-24, 2010)
Session 1. Opening: Keynote Speech and Introduction (March 24, 2010)
Keynote Speech: Toshiyuki Hosokawa

TA Training and PFF Program at Hokkaido University

Toshiyuki Hosokawa*
Institute for the Advancement of Higher Education, Hokkaido University

(Received on 17 September, 2010)

1. Statistics of Hokkaido University

Hokkaido University has 11,790 Under Graduate Students and 6,387 Graduate Students. Total number of Teaching Staff is 2,038. Our university consists of 12 faculties. In 2008, 2,609 of Bachelor degrees, 1,469 of Master degrees and 503 of Doctor degrees were given. Most of the mget jobs in a company, government office and a university. These data shows that our university is one of the key universities in Japan that educates future researchers, bureaucrats and company workers.

2. Changes by the Central Government

In these two decades huge deficits has been made in the central government finances (more than 800 trillion yen). Collapse of the ‘80s bubble economy happened at the same time. Companies could not continue to educate their new workers with their own budget. The Ministry of Education found the important role of universities in research and education under these conditions. In contrast, Japanese universities had not changed their system in these 60 years. We believe that economical success of Japanese companies was caused by good university systems. However the Ministry planned to enforce the university activities in research and education.

The Ministry of Education also asked us deregulation of curriculum in universities in 1991. She asked us to open our research results to the public simultaneously. In 2004, the ministry turned all national universities into independent administrative entities. It seems that it gave us the freedom to remake university system and curriculum. However these changes made us to remake everything.

Each national university has to present a middle term (6 years) plan and execute as the plan does. Afterwards the Ministry will review the results with this plan. That means all of the national universities have to change every year. The Central Education Council indicates the direction of change, and has power to change universities.

3. Effort by Each University

From 1991 most of universities reduced the number of subjects in liberal arts, but Hokkaido University did not reduce them. Most of universities disorganized the division for liberal arts. Our university also disorganized it but parts of the systems remained. For example each subject has a responsible faculty, and the faculty has to maintain

*) Correspondence: Institute for the Advancement of Higher Education, Hokkaido University, Sapporo 060-0817, Japan

the subject.

In 1995 Hokkaido University established a center for education named "Center for Research and Development in Higher Education." This new center gradually introduced new educational system as follows.

1. Evaluation by Students
2. Open the Data of Each Teacher About Research and Education
3. Faculty Development
4. Teaching Assistant
5. Core-Curriculum
6. e-Learning System, clicker
7. New Lecture Style for Introductory Science Course
8. GPA, CAP system
9. Guide for grade calculation

Other universities also introduced these systems simultaneously or followed our activities.

4. Ethical cord as a teacher

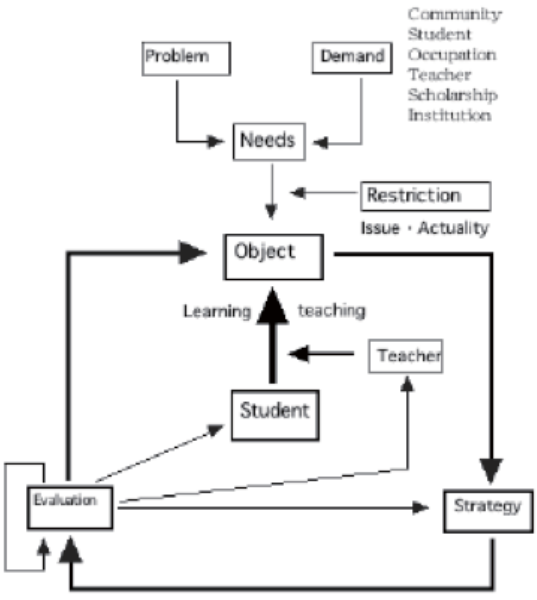
The number of professors in Japanese universities is more than 170 thousand. As a professional group we need 'professional sense (ethics)' in addition to educational object. Hokkaido University discussed the ethical cord as a teacher for these three years and established it in June 2009. The main points are as follows.

1. Respect to student
2. Polite manner and speech
3. Confidentiality
4. No harassment
5. Duty and effort for education

5. Workshop for new teachers

In the training course for new teacher, we teach about this ethical cord and a structure of education (Fig.1). There should be needs from society, students, teacher and so on. University curriculum must be changed with these needs in every time. We also teach the main structure of a syllabus. A syllabus is a contract between a teacher and a student. A syllabus must include goals and we must evaluate students based on how they reach the goals.

Fig.1. A structure of education



6. New System: Teaching Assistant (TA)

From 1992 TA system was introduced gradually in Japanese universities. At first the total number of TA was less than hundred in Hokkaido University. However the total number of TA is now about 1000 only for general education in the university. In 1998 we started to hold a training course for TA.

They were graduate students and the payment and education were poor. However they were important to cover the work of teachers. The experience of a TA is important educational chance for them. Some of them will be teachers and the experience will be useful. Even if they become employees of a company, teaching skill will be still important ability for their work. Our center began the TA training course from 1998 because of these reasons. It is a day course and the first actual training course in Japanese universities.

7. Training course for TA

The program of the training course is as follows. About 200~300 graduate students join this program in every year. As in Table 1, There were three mini lectures in the morning. In the first lecture professor Ando showed the system of liberal arts in our university including new systems like GPA that was not familiar with TA. In this way, TAs could understand the new educational system introduced within several years. In the second lecture professor Senaha gave a model of ideal TA by mentioning his experience as a TA in U.S.A. Since the role of Japanese TA is usually an assistant for a teacher, it is important to know how to help teachers effectively. He showed the best way to photo copy papers, to check attendance, to evaluate essays and

Table 1. Program of TA training course

9: 30	Address by the president
9: 35	Mini lecture ”Liberal Arts in Hokkaido Univ.”
	Prof. Ando (30 min.)
10: 05	Mini lecture “Teaching Assistant”
	Prof. Senaha (30 min.)
10: 35	rest (10 min.)
10: 45	Mini lecture “The basics of university education”
	Prof. Nishimori (15 min.)
11: 00	Panel discussion
	“Possibility of TA current situation and ideal”(40 min.)
	Chair Prof. Senaha
	Panelar Prof.Inoue, Prof.Oku, Ms.Hara, Mr. Yoshino
13: 00 ~ 13:30	Coffee break (free)
13: 30 ~	Group work and case study (150 min.)
	A. Freshmen seminar
	B. Lecture
	C. Writing
	D. Information Technology
	E. Experimentation
	F. Foreign language
	G. Medical, Dental course

Table 2. Courses opened for future faculty in Hokkaido University

1. Introduction to Argumentative Writings
2. Professional Argumentative Writings
3. Debate skills
4. Academic writing
5. Preparing Future Faculty: An Introduction to Teaching and Writing for Graduate Students
6. Teaching method in Science —for PFF—

so on. Professor Nishimori showed the system of education. The contents was as same as that in the workshop for new teachers. In this way, this TA training course followed the concepts of the workshop mentioned before.

The panel discussion gave TAs actual experiences in our university. The invited speakers were two professors, who had employed TA, and two graduate students, who had worked as TA. Professors showed how they used their TAs. Students showed the difficulties and merit of the job of TA and gave some advices.

In the afternoon, participants were divided into several groups according to the kind of their job as TA. In each group, students joined in several kinds of activities. In most cases, they joined in group discussion and discussed about model cases that might happen during their job. An example of the cases discussed in 'Lecture' group was 'There is a student in the classroom who is reading a book irrelevant to the lecture. What should I do?' In the discussion, they thought about such cases from the viewpoint of a teacher.

8. PFF (Preparing Future Faculty) program

In these two years, several graduate schools in our university opened courses for a future faculty. Table 2 showed the list of courses. Most of the courses except 6, English are used as communication language. In the course 6, Japanese was used as course language. The courses 5 and 6 were held by our center.

9. Conclusion

Japanese university began to change the whole system 15 years ago. It made universities better in many senses. However it is still on the way. The most important point is to make all of the students and teachers participate in this activity. Most of them are still concentrated only in research activity. We have to make students and teachers more serious about learning and teaching.